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ABSTRACT

The experience of Asian Americans as a racial category and as a multiplicity of identities in the United States is examined. Demographically, Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial and ethnic group in the United States. Race continues to be the major organizing principle in the United States for black and nonblack minorities, including Asian Americans. Whether racial and ethnic minorities still matter in an increasingly multicultural America is an intriguing question, but categories are still used in discussions of education and multiple social issues. Because group identification does not occur in a vacuum, but within the context of how a society defines groups, Asian Americans are examined in terms of current racial and ethnic statistical policy. Following an introduction, chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to Directive 15 of the federal Office of Management and Budget. With Directive 15, the use of racial classification shifted from one of exclusion to one of explicit inclusion of specific groups. Chapter 4 focuses on Asian Americans as a racial category and minority group. Chapter 5 addresses the multiplicity of identities of Asian Americans, and comes to the conclusion that Asian Americans may no longer be viewed solely as a racial category but as a pan-ethnic group that is defined beyond a majority/minority paradigm. The question of minority status of Asian Americans is of particular interest with regard to higher education and admissions policies that may favor one or another group. (Contains 1 table and 67 references.) (SLD)

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